

Minutes
Pro Parks Levy Oversight Committee
Opportunity Fund Open House
March 7, 2005

Committee Members Present: Jeff Hou, Keith Rickards, Terry Holme, Adrian Moroles, Doug Dunham, Peter Lukevich, Russ Brubaker, Sharon Lee

Staff: Cheryl Fraser, Donald Harris, Catherine Anstett, Michael Shiosaki, Cathy Tuttle. Ken Bounds attended the open house.

Opportunity Fund Open House: The meeting began with an open house. Committee members toured the room, observing the project boards displayed by Opportunity Fund applicants from south and central west Seattle (projects 19 through 36).

Committee Business: The meeting was called to order by Russ Brubaker. Citizen presentations proceeded in the number order of the projects.

19. International District Community Center, Joann Natalia Aquino: This request is to acquire space that will provide for more programming at the new International District Community Center.

20. Terry Pettus Park Extension, Jim Goetz: Acquisition of this property will add 2,500 square feet to the park which is located on the east side of Lake Union. The acquisition is consistent with the Fairview Green Street Guidelines. This project is a unique opportunity for the community.

21. Big Howe, Brian Fleisher: This project will improve drainage and access for Big Howe Park. Seniors and schools come from outside the area to use the playground. It also is used by sports teams and families. The current play structures are 25 years old and deteriorating. The project will replace the play structures. Additional fundraising is underway. The Opportunity Fund money will provide for site preparation.

22. Cascade People's Center Eco-Renovation, Scott Laetans: The People's Center is surrounded by a playfield and P-patch. The community has raised \$600,000 to date and has completed 95% of the design for the renovation. Support has come from Vulcan, Pemco and others. The Cascade neighborhood where this project is located is part of the South Lake Union Urban Village. The renovation is planned to meet environmental LEEDS platinum standards.

23. Kubota Gardens, Mary Anne Parmeter: This proposal is to acquire one property adjacent on two sides to Kubota Garden. The last time this property was on the market was in 1920.

24. Amy Yee Tennis Center, Leslie Look: There is more demand for court time than the tennis center can accommodate. Court rentals generate money and this income is being

lost because of the lack of available courts. Twenty-eight years after the tennis center was developed the four outdoor courts have never been resurfaced. The Garfield High School tennis team practices here and the slick condition of the courts is dangerous. Property to the north and south of the courts is undeveloped Park Department property. The tennis community would be grateful for the renovation of the existing courts and would welcome the addition of two more courts. The United States Tennis Association has provided letters of support for this proposal.

25. Beacon Hill Trail and Restoration, Craig Thompson: This project will build and maintain a trail into the greenbelt adjacent to Jose Rizal Park. It will also restore another area adjacent to the park with native plantings and removal of invasive plants.

26. Brighton Science Park, Jason Medeiros: Brighton Playfield is a 13 acre park adjacent to Aki Kurose middle school; the community needs a more active and educational park. The community is working with three science teachers to develop a science park. Ideas for interactive science play areas include a jogging trail that replicates the solar system and an area that demonstrates the physics of basketball.

27. Central Park at Rainier Vista, Ed Rose: A photo of the area was displayed showing what has been developed to date at the park. The Seattle Housing Authority project has run out of money to develop the park, which is about one-acre in size and is the center of the Phase 1 Rainier Vista development. Rainier Vista and the surrounding neighborhood are among the most diverse areas in the city.

28. Mapes Creek Walkway, Lynn Miner and Barb Biondi: This is the only pedestrian corridor in the neighborhood. Thank you to the Committee for approving funding in the first cycle of the Opportunity Fund. The initial funding provided for clean-up, trimming trees from under the wires and the project overall helped increase community self-esteem. The second phase will link retail services and open up Fisher Street to the library. This has been a high crime neighborhood. This project is a keystone to neighborhood revitalization for the business district.

29. Van Asselt Playground, Monika Christine Matthews: Van Asselt is located on Beacon Hill, a very diverse community and is adjacent to New Holly. The park has a basketball court, play structure, and wading pool and is heavily used. The park serves as a unifying point for all cultures and provides a safe place to gather and play. The request is for funding to expand and renovate the play area. The Community Center Levy provided money for improving the community center but didn't include the play area. This is an urban revitalization area and is 1/4 mile from light rail.

30. Whitworth Elementary School, Lori Brown: Whitworth is located in a neighborhood revitalization area. It is deficient in breathing room. The school has 250 students, 93% minority and 80% below the poverty level. While the neighborhood is one mile from Seward Park, many families have never set foot in Seward Park. Lots of families in the area live in apartment buildings with no outdoor space. The community supports this project. For a Small and Simple Neighborhood Matching Fund grant the community was

awarded, they needed to provide 300 hours of service but provided 900. An example of the support is Gracie, a kindergarten student, who donated eight cents.

31. Rose Greenbelt, Jim Nuerenberg: There is a very caring group supporting this project. The City's timeline indicates the property will be sold for private use very soon if not acquired for a park. It is owned by the Fleets and Facilities Division of the City, which is trying to dispose of the property. The community is trying to get it transferred to become a park, rather than sold to a private interest. There has been a lot of infill growth in this area: where there are now 40 houses there could be 110. The community wants to keep the property in its native state. Sixteen houses are now in construction in the neighborhood, and another 16 are scheduled to be built.

32. Camp Long, Mat McBride: Camp Long is the only Park Department building created by the CCA in FDR's era. The park serves the West Seattle Hub Urban Village. The project will upgrade the kitchen so that the facility can be used for gatherings and weddings. It also includes a redesign of the teaching space that serves student volunteers. This project is not included in the Park Department's Major Maintenance project list and will not be considered for upgrades until 2010.

33. Cesar Chavez, Mark Johnson: People come together at this geographic center of the South Park neighborhood. The request is for \$200,000 to build the park; the community has raised an additional \$200,000. The park is ready to be developed – if funding is received, they could start in September.

34. Ercolini Park Property, Katie Hjorten: There are 800 children in this neighborhood with no park within walking distance – the closest park is one mile away. A survey of the community showed an interest in play equipment and a grassy area. Funding will provide for landscaping and access from the street corner. This park will provide a sanctuary for the community.

35. Junction Plaza, Kay Knapton: There has been a lot of development in this neighborhood – 165 new residential units are going to be built. Monorail development will lead to another 200 residential units. The property is a vacant 3,600 square foot lot that is being purchased through the first round of the Opportunity Fund. The proposal is to convert the open space into an area that can have activities for people of all ages, including residents and employees of nearby businesses. The park will provide a place to eat lunch, play and gather.

36. Marra Farms, Lee Harper: The Marra Farm Coalition is a diverse group providing stewardship for the park. The goal is to have a neighborhood gathering space for children, teens and parents. The park will be a regional model of an urban community farm. The need is to invest now to work towards creating an awesome park.

At the conclusion of the public comments, the process for continuing evaluation of the Opportunity Fund projects was described. The next Committee meeting is March 28 where staff recommendations will be presented and the Committee will vote on

preliminary recommendations. The April 25th meeting will be a public hearing and on May 23 the Committee will vote on final recommendations.

Questions from Committee Members

Amy Yee Tennis Center: A question was directed to the Amy Yee Tennis Center regarding whether they had done a fiscal analysis to determine the revenue generating potential of their project. The project representative responded that they have a verbal estimate of the cost but haven't projected additional income. They do charge fees for the outdoor court use. A bubble is in the long range plan for the facility – it is not part of the Opportunity Fund project. The lights would be a pay as you use system.

Camp Long: In response to a question, the Camp Long representative stated that they have not been renting the downstairs classroom space. Their income is currently about \$50,000 and would probably double after the improvements. Last year the facility hosted 14 weddings. For the lab part of the project, they are hoping to develop a computer lab – they have had GIS software donated to their program. The amount they have used for the kitchen estimate is based on catalog prices and was a quick estimate of the costs.

Brighton Science Project: In response to a question, Brighton's representative noted that their project would be like an outdoor science museum.

Whitworth Elementary: Whitworth noted that their project would install a public entrance to the property and provide artwork. The school is relatively new and there has been no talk of closing it.

Big Howe: Responding to a Committee member question, the Big Howe representative stated that the park is adjacent to an urban village.

Kubota Garden: The Kubota Garden representative noted that the Kubota Garden Foundation will be selling another office building on 51st that they own free and clear. She also stated that the landscaping on the property proposed for purchase fits well with Kubota Garden – it has cedar trees and mature rhododendrons.

Junction Plaza: A question was raised about the business community's contribution to the Junction Plaza project. The project representative noted that businesses contributed most of the \$100,000 match required to buy the site. They have set a goal of raising \$100,000 to \$150,000 more. The request to the Opportunity Fund is for 2/3 of the project cost, with 1/3 to be raised by the community and other sources such as foundations.

Committee Business

Participants were thanked for coming and making presentations. The next meeting will be Monday, March 28. The meeting was adjourned.

Minutes were approved at the March 28, 2005 meeting of the Pro Parks Levy Oversight Committee.